

HRC NEWS & VIEWS

Volume 6 Issue 2
February 2010



EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER ANNOUNCED

Lisa Sedlak, Chairperson of the Employee Recognition Committee, recently announced that Linda Weber, Infrastructure Support Technician, was selected as the first Employee of the Quarter for 2010. Congratulations, Linda!

Linda began her career at HRC in 1985 as a transfer from the Beatrice State Developmental Center where she worked for five years. Initially, Linda was a Teacher on the Developmental Unit for Children (DUC) prior to her current position. In addition to her IT Support duties, Linda serves on the Editorial Board of *HRC News and Views*.

Comments from the nomination form included, "It doesn't matter if Linda has incomplete projects on her desk or a new program to install, she never hesitates to assist with computer problems when they arise. Linda definitely puts her co-workers first, and goes above and beyond to make things work easier. Many times when you call her, she stops what she is doing and looks into the problem, and fixes any malfunctions within a short time. On those few occasions when the problem is above her level of expertise, Linda will seek to find the answer to accommodate the needs of the worker. She is prompt to get back to the requestor with an answer. In addition to fixing a problem, detailed instructions are provided after the problem is solved. You can also rely on Linda to help with special projects or events when assistance is needed. She is committed to meeting the needs of not only staff, but also the youth as they work towards their education using the computer. Her pleasant demeanor makes a sometime frustrating and difficult situation less stressful."

Linda's supervisor, Kathy Ryder, shared her remarks following the announcement and said, "I'm very honored and proud that HRC has recognized Linda for this prestigious award. IS&T is very fortunate to have such a dedicated, hardworking and customer oriented staff member as Linda. We appreciate you taking the time to show appreciation for Linda and for Linda being able to carry out the duties to the excellence your facility requires. Linda is truly an asset to this agency!!!"

Linda was presented with a certificate, a designated parking space for the quarter and her photo displayed in the cases located in Building 3 and 5.

Keep up the good work, Linda!

President's Day - How it came about

It's the first federal holiday to recognize an American citizen, and was named a federal holiday in 1885 for all federal offices in the U.S. It wasn't until 1976 that Washington's Birthday (February 22) was moved to the third Monday of February in an attempt to establish it more along the lines of President's Day to also honor Abraham Lincoln who was born on February 12.

THANK YOU Employee
Appreciation Committee
for the hot chocolate and
cookies. Very good!

KUDOS TO

**Nancy Horsham, Nancy Kin-
youn and Linda Weber for
the creation of the new elec-
tronic process for reviewing
policies and
procedures.
Good job!**



What Have We Been Doing? The Projects of 2009 by Marj Colburn



As I worked on the Annual Report for the Governing Body, it's always amazing to document all the changes and projects that take place on campus during the year. Some of the projects have resulted in minor changes, but some of them have had a big impact on what we do and how we do it. Here is a "quick list" of the highlights.

The HRC Policy and Procedure Committee continues to meet monthly. Although we are required to review/revise each policy every two years, most of our policies don't last that long! There are changes in the HJCDP program and how we deliver services that always result in going back to the policies and making changes. Some of the major changes have been in revising policies related to the Pharmacy closure and no longer having a separate Nursing Manual. Even when we do things like moving the Switchboard, every policy that references the Switchboard has to be reviewed to be sure what the policy says is accurate practice.

The Documentation PIGroup was started in 2008 and continues currently. About every 6 weeks, a sampling of 10 staff chartings are reviewed for appropriate interventions and active engagement with the youth. There are about 18 staff members left who are currently being reviewed – everyone else was either doing a good job of charting all along or have improved their charting to the point it no longer needs to be reviewed. We will continue this process, as we are always getting new employees, and we want to be sure their charting is meeting requirements.

The Supervising Youth PIGroup was started in 2009. This group was created following a high number of incidents where youth were left unsupervised either on the unit or in the Oasis Room. Next Steps were developed to address this concern. Since the Oasis Room is part of the school, Mr. Baisinger has also been working to address the problem. Our numbers have been going up again, so this group will be revisiting steps taken that reduced the numbers and determine what is happening that youth are being left unsupervised again. Hand-off communication will be key in this process.

The Radio Improvement PIGroup started as a result of looking at the use of the panic switches, the crisis intervention key pads, batteries, radios and other issues with communication. The group was asked to evaluate the effectiveness of communication with the tools available on campus. Due to complaints by the teaching staff and therapists related to noise, ear buds were purchased to reduce audible chatter from the radios. These seem to be working well. A policy related to charging the radio batteries was also implemented.

HRC continues to be involved in Disaster Planning, especially in relation to the possible H1N1 flu outbreaks. Seasonal flu shots and H1N1 vaccine were made available for all youth and staff who were interested in receiving one. The Safety Officers from all three Regional Centers meet, plan and share information about steps taken or needing to be taken for Emergency Preparedness.

A Key Control project was undertaken to reduce the number of keys that staff have to manage. With the closure of buildings and consolidation of activities into Building #3, there are some keys that just aren't needed in daily activities. All staff have keys issued appropriate to their job at the time of hire. Keys are returned when a staff person leaves employment. Staff must report keys lost through the incident reporting system, and periodically keys are reviewed to be sure that they are still accurate for that person's job. Per policy, staff are only to take off campus their name badges and the key necessary to access an office or locker where the rest of their keys are located.

The Nebraska Youth Academy (NYA) has been documenting Pre and Post testing related to grade placement for the youth. Although Pre testing was usually completed, sometimes Post testing did not occur before a youth was discharged from the program. With a tracking system developed, Post testing is now taking place more consistently.

The NYA also changed the educational computer program used by the youth switching from NovaNet to Apex. The youth seem to like the new system. The program is less costly, so there are savings to the school as well.

Mr. Parker completed a Transition Study showing what happened to a randomly selected group of youth following discharge from HRC. The results show that the school has a positive impact on most youth, many of whom are continuing on with their education either at their home school, at a technical or vocational setting or completing their GED.

The moving of the Switchboard to Building #3 streamlined visitor accessibility to the youth. It also consolidated services and gives us the opportunity to have an active Copy Center available in the building.

The Chapel renovations and asbestos clean-up have been completed. The youth are really enjoying using the area. Sometimes I'm not sure that the youth know it's winter out there, based on the shorts and t-shirts I see!

I don't know what 2010 has in store for us, but we sure were busy people in 2009! Here's hoping we have many more opportunities in the upcoming year to make additional improvements in the services we provide to the youth.

An Order of Morale, To Go Please submitted by Susan Kotas

This article was submitted to the News and Views a few years ago. Since that time, HRC has undergone many changes. I can't count the number of times that someone (including myself) said something like "as long as I have a job, I can deal with it." Those of us here now do have jobs, but our memories seem short and again it seems that comments about the negative aspects we perceive about our jobs/worksite/conditions outnumber the positives. It seemed like a good time to run this article again and reconsider our individual comments and actions about our work.

My three favorite "training" requests include the following: Come teach them/us how to . . .

- Come to work on time
- Be a team/play nicely together
- Have good morale

Sometimes people ask for training to solve another type of problem. Do people really not know how to come to work on time or are other factors involved? And while you can teach people concepts about teams and how they develop and work together, you can't train a team into being.

My new favorite is the concept of morale. "Morale here is the worst it's ever been. THEY need to do something about it". What is morale? And who are "they"? My dictionary says morale is "an **individual's** state of mind." The morale at any location is a cumulative result of what each of us say and do each day. If I stand in line at the grocery store and complain about how awful it is to work here, everyone else in line and everyone they talk to will pass that on. Doesn't that reflect poorly on me? If it is such a bad place to work, I must not be doing a good job. How many people do I complain to before I make myself believe it is a bad place to work? And once I believe it is not a good place to work, does the quality of my work deteriorate? Each day I have choices to make; do I go to work or not? Do I go on time? Do I go in with a positive attitude or try to find the problems with everyone and everything?

I recently saw a cartoon in the paper where the grim reaper was on a couch with a psychiatrist sitting next to him taking notes. The reaper is saying "It's just horrible, Doc. I'm constantly plagued by pleasant thoughts of happiness and joy". Do you know anyone who thinks and speaks like this? I challenge each of you to spend 48 hours identifying positive aspects of YOUR workplace. There are many here if we are willing to see them.

You can't order up morale like a Big Mac and fries. It can't be packaged, sold, or taught. It can only be developed one person, one comment, one action at a time. Each of us has to decide if the time and effort required to help our workplace be successful is worth the investment.

Performance Evaluations By Carolyn Brown

The dreaded performance review! Some people look at them that way. I choose to look at it as a way to better myself. Receiving a glowing appraisal can do wonders for your morale and can be a great motivator. Receiving a poor review, on the other hand, can leave you ejected and frustrated.

Whether you're a top performer or are having a difficult time meeting your expectations, performance reviews can be great learning tools. Here are some tips to help you.

- **Take the criticism maturely and professionally.** It is not easy to be criticized in any situation. But don't be offended, evaluations are meant for you to learn from it. Keep your emotions in check and resist the urge to be defensive.
- **Ask for specifics.** The best way to improve your performance is if you know what you are doing wrong. Ask the supervisor to spell out exactly where you are lacking so you can make improvements. If he or she simply says that you "don't seem to be motivated," respectfully ask for examples of where and when you have fallen short. This will help you see things from your supervisor's perspective.
- **Understand expectations.** Sometimes being a star at work is all about expectations. You need to understand your supervisor's idea of "outstanding" or "meets expectations" in order to meet them. Ask your supervisor to give you examples of accomplishments or behaviors that are required to earn a better evaluation.
- **Set clear and attainable goals.** The best way to show that you are improving is to set goals and meet those goals. With your supervisor's help, develop a list of short-and long-term goals that go along with the areas in your review. This will demonstrate that you are committed to improvement and will give you a road map to follow.
- **Don't go it alone.** If you find that you need assistance, ask for it. Maybe you just haven't gotten the hang of the new record system or are having troubles managing a certain client. If you don't step up and ask for help, your work and your career will continue to suffer.
- **Meet regularly.** If the only time you sit down with your supervisor is at your annual review, it may be difficult for you to improve much in the workplace. You need to build a relationship with your supervisor that provides you with ongoing support and feedback. If necessary, set up meetings monthly to talk about your goals and discuss your progress.

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Performance Evaluations

Keep a record. The performance review is normally conducted just once a year after a new hire has ended probation. That's why it is important for you to keep a file of your accomplishments throughout the year. Share these with your supervisor as he/she prepares your performance appraisal to remind your supervisor of your achievements.

ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS



For most people, when they are asked "What do you want for Christmas?" They usually reply with a material item or hopes to make life better. Well, Mr. Baisinger and the teachers discovered the real wish of Heather, Sherry, Dr. Judson and Marj this year. The Nebraska Youth Academy staff was presented the cookie featured above with the inscription, **ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS THE TEACHERS TO COME BACK!**

Although the youth enjoy the break from school, it certainly can be a trying time to keep the energy and interests of teenage boys in tact. Overall, the break went well and there were no major crisis.

It's great to be back in the routine!

FOR SALE

Cub Cadet Snowblower. Clean and good! It has rubber tires with chains. \$400 or best offer. Contact Wanda at 308-380-6060.

WANTED

Someone to help make a DVD from a VHS or a referral to someone who could do this. Radio Flyer wagon restoration or referral to someone who could do this. Help to learn how to use digital camera or a referral to someone who could do this. Call Mary Lou at ext. 3479 and leave message for each of the above.

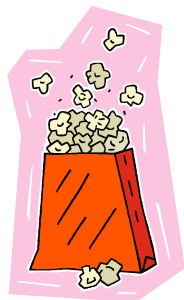
Let's do some hootin'!! By Cheri Delay

February 20 is the day for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere to go outside at high noon, shake our hands over our heads or beat on pots and pans, and yell "Hootie Hoo" over and over and over to chase away winter and make ready for spring one month from that day. In the Southern Hemisphere this tradition is done on August 22.



I don't know if it works – but I'm game for anything to drive away the cold, icy days of winter and bring on my daffodils popping up their bright sunny faces. How 'bout you?

HOOTIE HOO EVERYONE!!!!



TAKE A BREAK!



It's Friday afternoon, it's been a long week and your work is far from done. The aroma of freshly popped popcorn is wafting your way. Isn't it time to TAKE A BREAK?!

For several weeks, youth from the Prevocational Center have been selling their wares in the foyer of building 3 on Friday afternoons. This has been an opportunity for youth to hone their cooking skills, learn a little about marketing and practice greeting customers. Muffins, brownies, and breads have been well received, but the peanut butter lovers cereal bars and hot popcorn seem to be the favorites.

So go ahead, take a few minutes between 1:05 and 1:35 on Friday to get a cold pop and a treat from the PVC youth. The income goes into the youth activities fund, so all the youth benefit from this project.

WANTED

CASES FOR VCR TAPES AND DVD MOVIES. If you have any plastic cases or even the cardboard covers that we can use for the library videos, please call Sherry at ext. 3260.

E Policies by Nancy Kinyoun



The Policy & Procedure Committee meets monthly to review/revise HRC Policies. Beginning in February of 2010, we will be implementing a new electronic process for staff to sign off on new/revise policies. This process will eliminate the paper sign off sheets we have been using.

Each staff person will receive an email from Nancy Horsham with the revised policies attached. You will be asked to read each policy then click on an "approve" button when you are finished. Your supervisor will be meeting with you to go over the instructions.

If you have any questions during this implementation process, please feel free to contact either Nancy Horsham (ext. 3392) or Nancy Kinyoun (ext. 3116).

What happened to the Panic Alarms?

By Jean Luther

Those of you who have been employees for a number of years remember the panic alarm switches. You may even remember the procedures on their use and where they were located. But for those new employees you may never have seen a switch or if you have you don't know the procedure for their use. And what about those little white Crisis Intervention pads in the nursing stations? What's with those?

It seems that even the employees who have been here for awhile didn't really remember the procedures for their use. While testing the panic switches during inspections, I would often hear staff ask what that noise was and what were they supposed to do about it? So I began questioning their usefulness. I voiced my concerns to the administrative staff. They asked that I conduct a survey to determine if they were still necessary or if they could be turned off.

The survey included questions to determine if staff used the panic switches; if they knew where they were located; if they knew how to respond if the Crisis Intervention keypad was in alarm and if they felt the 2-way radios were sufficient when staff needed extra help in emergency situations. Questions were also asked regarding the use and reliability of the 2-way radios.

Other problems were identified during the survey. Of course this caused more work for several people and an extra Performance Improvement Group was developed to manage the outcomes. Hopefully, the improvements have increased safety for staff.

The outcomes of the survey are as follows:

- The battery life of the 2-way radios does not always last through staff shift.
- There is a need for therapists to have a quick

response from unit staff if there is a disturbance in their office.

- Both therapists and teachers responded that the radio chatter is a nuisance and caused interruptions in groups and classrooms.
- Panic switches are not used by staff because;
 - They are not conveniently located.
 - Staff do not know the procedures for the Crisis Intervention keypad.
 - Panic switches are often activated out of curiosity or horseplay by youth.
 - The panic switches have not been used much since the Adolescent Psychiatric Unit has closed.

Solutions to the above problems are as follows:

- Batteries are charged following new procedures to ensure that staff members receive a fully charged battery. Some new batteries were also ordered and a system will be put in place to determine if any of the charger bases are no longer working properly.
- Therapists' cell phones and desk phones were programmed so they could push one button for quick help from staff.
- Earbuds were given to day shift staff to reduce the noise from radio chatter. The earbuds allow staff alone to hear radio messages and respond into a small microphone without handling the 2-way radio itself.
- The panic switches were turned off, but left in place if a future need arises.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS by Heather Sidders

I have had a few requests from staff members to have staff meetings so, starting the end of January, we began meeting with the day shift and afternoon shift. There are notebooks on each unit and one in the PVC room for staff to write down questions, comments or suggestions. We read the entries in the notebooks and then problem solve the issues as a group. Two of the main issues that are coming up in the recent staff meetings have to do with communication and consistency. Day staff thought it would be helpful to have a team building session to help them get to know one another better and help them open up their communication styles in a fun way. I have talked to Ed Services about getting an activity planned per their suggestion. We have also been talking a lot about hand off communication and ways to make that process better. Several suggestions have been made, and I hope to have some improvements to the current plan implemented by the end of February. I really appreciate everyone's willingness to come to the meetings and discuss issues affecting the program. Working through the tough issues can only make us a stronger TEAM!

From the kitchen of Delores Kimminau.....

CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER SPREAD

1 tblsp. smooth or crunchy peanut butter
2 tblsp confectioners' sugar
1 tsp. cocoa
Few drops water
Few drops vanilla (optional)

In a cup, place the peanut butter, confectioners' sugar, cocoa and a few drops of water. Add vanilla, if desired. Stir vigorously until blended, and add more drops of water until consistency is reached for spreading. Spread on bread to desired thickness.

Delores challenges Corinne Jensen to share a recipe next month!

From the kitchen of Marj Colburn

SOUTHWEST CROCKPOT BREAKFAST

1 tbsp. butter
1 lb. bulk breakfast sausage, cooked and drained
1 onion, chopped
1 green bell pepper, chopped
4 oz. can chopped green chilies, drained
2½ cups grated Monterey Jack Cheese
18 eggs

Grease inside of crockpot with butter. Starting with sausage, layer meat, onions, peppers, chilies, and cheese, repeating the layering process until all ingredients are used.

In large mixer bowl, beat eggs with wire whisk or egg beater until combined, then pour over mixture in the crockpot. Cover and cook on low 4 hours. Serve with sour cream or fresh salsa. 12 servings.

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It is the policy of the Editorial Board to attempt to print any article that does not attack another person. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit articles for size & content.

AA/EOE/ADA

2010 Governor's Employee Recognition Program

Preparations are beginning for the 2010 Governor's Employee Recognition Program. In keeping with tradition, the month of October will be declared as "State Employee Recognition Month."

Employees are encouraged to participate in the nomination process for the DHHS Employee of the Year and Supervisor/Manager of the Year Program. This is a great opportunity to recognize those individuals, inside and/or outside of your work area, who have made special contributions.

Nomination forms can be found at:

<http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/hur/recognition/GovernorsProgram.htm>

The nomination forms must be submitted to Marj Colburn by March 12. All nominations will be forwarded to Lincoln for review and determination of recipients for these awards.

Questions on the process or locating the forms can also be directed to any staff in the Human Resource Office.

February Word Search

F H O C P U G U M T K U O H E
O S T N E D I S E R P N I Z N
U G N B N V C X G M F B H T I
R W O O N O K H Q E E X L A T
T C I U S E T F O R W E G C N
E B X Q Y R B G N C V D A G E
E E W U L A E A N E O R S Y L
T C Y E V L T B S I N L R Q A
H N D T A I Y O M A H O A B V
A A N E N T O D T E T S P T B
X M A G I R H I U S M H A O E
N O C P A H O E I O F E S W Z
L R F M N N S H R A L T R A I
T N E M U N O M L I N C O L N
G R O U N D H O G S T R A E H

BOUQUET, CANDY, CARNATION, CHOCOLATE,
CLOUDY, FOUR TEETH, GROUNDHOG, HEARTS,
HIBERNATING, HISTORY, LINCOLN, MONUMENT,
PENNSYLVANIA, PRESIDENTS, REMEMBER,
ROMANCE, ROOSEVELT, VALENTINE, WASHINGTON,
WEATHER